

Message Text

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SUBJECT: 1978 AMERICA DAYS - JOENSUU

1. THE 33RD ANNUAL AMERICA DAYS CELEBRATION, A POST SUPPORTED EVENT ORGANIZED BY LEAGUE OF FINNISH-AMERICAN SOCIETIES, WAS HELD IN JOENSUU, CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE OF NORTH KARELIA (LOCATED IN EASTERN FINLAND AND BORDERING THE SOVIET UNION) FROM AUGUST 18-20. THE THREE DAY CELEBRATION IS DESIGNED TO SHOW THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF FINLAND, STRENGTHEN CONTACTS WITH THE TOP PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP, AND MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC. OVER 1000 PEOPLE INCLUDING GOVERNOR ESA TIMONEN, MAYOR AARO HEIKKILA, CITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN TERHO A. KONONEN, CITY GOVERNMENT CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE MAIN PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPER SEPPO VENTO, AND JOENSUU UNIVERSITY RECTOR HEIKKI KIRKINEN, ATTENDED AMERICA DAYS PROGRAMS.

2. THIS YEAR'S THEME WAS "CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BIG AND SMALL NATIONS," AND LEAGUE'S AMERICAN GUEST SPEAKER WAS JOHN RICHARDSON, JR., PRESIDENT OF YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING AND A FORMER HEAD OF CU. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES SAMUEL E. FRY SUBSTITUTED FOR AMBASSADOR RIDGWAY, WHO HAD BEEN CALLED BACK TO THE U.S. TO SERVE ON A SELECTION PANEL. OTHER EMBASSY PARTICIPANTS WERE THE CONSULAR OFFICER, AND ALL USICA AMERICANS.
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ACTIVITIES INCLUDED THE MAIN FESTIVAL PROGRAM IN THE AUDITORIUM OF JOENSUU UNIVERSITY, A COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC COMPETITION FOR FINNISH GROUPS, A MODERN ICON PAINTING CONTEST AND EXHIBITION, VISITS TO PLACES CONNECTED WITH THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTH KARELIA, WHITE WATER CANOEING, A JAZZ CONCERT, AND A GALA DINNER DANCE AND ENTERTAINMENT SHOW. PRESS COVERAGE WAS HEAVY IN NORTH KARELIA WHERE THE LARGEST NEWSPAPER, KARJALAINEN, GAVE

FRONT PAGE COVERAGE FOR THREE FULL DAYS, A FULL PAGE OF FEATURE MATERIAL, AND WELCOMING EDITORIALS IN BOTH FINNISH AND ENGLISH WHILE THE REGIONAL RADIO DVOTED HALF OF ITS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAM TO AMERICA DAYS AND U.S.-FINNISH CULTURAL RELATIONS. NATIONAL COVERAGE COULD BE TERMED ROUTINE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FINLAND'S LEADING NEWSPAPER, INDEPENDENT HELSINGIN SANOMAT WHICH CARRIED A FEATURE-TYPE INTERVIEW AND THREE-COLUMN PICTURE OF THE CHARE D'AFFAIRES AUG. 21.

3. AT MAIN FESTIVAL JOHN RICHARDSON, JR. SPOKE ABOUT IMBALANCE IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN GREAT POWERS AND SMALL NATIONS AND SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES FOR CORRECTING IMBALANCE WHERE FINLAND IS CONCERNED: IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO WORK TO INCREASE AMERICAN AWARENESS OF FINLAND THAN FINNISH AWARENESS OF AMERICA. AMERICANS SHOULD SEEK TO BECOME MORE GLOBALLY AWARE. MASS MEDIA IN THE U.S. SHOULD BE MORE AWARE OF NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL, AND EVEN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES.

4. TURNOUTS FOR MOST EVENTS WERE SUBSTANTIAL. COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC CONTEST AND COUNTRY AND WESTERN EVENING SHOW BOTH HAD CAPACITY CROWDS OF ABOUT 500, AS DID JAZZ CONCERT. MAIN FESTIVAL AND DINNER DANCE EACH ATTRACTED AUDIENCES OF ABOUT 350. OPENING OF ICON EXHIBIT, LARGEST EXHIBIT OF MODERN ICONS EVER HELD IN FINLAND, ATTRACTED ALMOST 200. TRIPS TO VARIOUS REGIONAL TOURIST SITES INCLUDING HISTORIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND THE VALAMO MONASTERY, WERE WELL ATTENDED.

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5. THIS YEAR A NUMBER OF NEW ELEMENTS WERE ADDED TO AMERICA DAYS CELEBRATIONS TO INCREASE LONG RANGE IMPACT AND NEWS VALUE OF THESE YEARLY CELEBRATIONS. INSTEAD OF BRINGING IN AMERICAN TALENT OR EXHIBITS, WE DECIDED TO SPONSOR CONTESTS OPEN TO LOCAL PERFORMING AND FINE ARTISTS WITH TRIPS TO U.S. AS TOP PRIZES. IN THIS FIRST ATTEMPT, LEAGUE ORGANIZED COUNTRY MUSIC, ICON PAINTING AND ESSAY CONTESTS. ICON PAINTING IS AN ESTABLISHED ART FORM HERE AND THERE WERE 255 ENTRIES, OF WHICH 155 WERE CHOSEN FOR EXHIBIT. LEAGUE WILL SEND EXHIBIT TO U.S. ON TOUR. COUNTRY MUSIC CONTEST ATTRACTED ENTRANTS FROM ALL OVER FINLAND AND IT POPULARITY WAS AN EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN FINLAND. ESSAY CONTEST DIDN'T ATTRACT AS MANY ENTRANTS AS EXPECTED, AND NONE OF THE ESSAYS WERE CONSIDERED GOOD ENOUGH TO MERIT A TRIP TO THE U.S. FOR THE WINNTER.

6. ICON AND COUNTRY MUSIC CONTESTS GENERATED GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST IN WEEKS PRECEDING AMERICA DAYS, AND NEWS COVERAGE OF PRIZE WINNERS' TRIPS TO U.S. OUGHT TO GENERATE MORE PUBLICITY.

7. IN CONNECTION WITH AMERICA DAYS THEME, THE PROGRAM OFFICER SPOKE IN FOUR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ABOUT STUDY OPPORTUNITIES IN U.S.

AND SHOWED AGENCY FILM "IF YOU WANT TO STUDY IN THE U.S." THE TOTAL AUDIENCE WAS OVER 1,000.

8. THE LOCAL PRESS RECORDED AMERICA DAYS EVENTS. INCLUDING SPEECHES, IN GREAT DETAIL DAY BY DAY, AND THE PROVINCE'S LEADING NEWSPAPER, CONSERVATIVE KARJALAINEN (CIRC. 49,000) IN PARTICULAR EMPHASIZED EMBASSY PARTICIPATION IN ITS PICTURE COVERAGE. ON AUG. 18 KARJALAINEN RAN AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARGE' FRY ON U.S.-FINNISH RELATIONS, CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTACTS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS IN THESE RELATIONS. IN AN EDITORIAL PUBLISHED IN FINNISH AND ENGLISH ON THE SAME DAY, THE NEWSPAPER POINTED OUT THAT THE THEME OF THE CELEBRATION, "CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN BIG AND SMALL NATIONS," DOES NOT INDICATE THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM; ON THE CONTRARY, "WE CAN POINT TO GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS

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WHICH FORM A FIRM BASIS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS." THE NEWSPAPER ALSO REFERRED TO OFFICIAL U.S.-FINNISH RELATIONS SAYING THAT THEY ARE GOOD, AND THEY ARE BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST. ON AUG. 19, THE FINNISH BROADCASTING COMPANY'S REGIONAL RADIO SERVICE FOR EASTERN FINLAND CARRIED A 30-MINUTE REPORT ON AMERICA DAYS, THE BULK OF WHICH WAS TAKEN UP BY A SPEECH EARLIER IN THE DAY BY CHARGE FRY EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE SAME PROGRAM ALSO INCLUDED AN INTERVIEW WITH FRY ON THE THEME OF THE AMERICA DAYS.

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